

EVIDENCES OF REGENERATION.

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The word Regeneration occurs but twice in the word of God. In Matt. 19:28 and Titus 3:5. The term in Greek so translated into the English is "*paliggenesia*," meaning a re-creation, regeneration or a begetting again.

In Matt. 19:28, Jesus said unto his disciples, "Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

This regeneration refers to the future when God shall make all things new; and the evidences of this regeneration, or re-creation, will be such as all can see and sufficiently understand. What is required of us now in relation to this regeneration is to believe that it will be brought about in God's own time, and in such a way as to show forth his glory, and before the welfare and happiness of his intelligent creatures. With this belief it becomes us so to live as to be ready at all times, for this great change.

Paul in his Epistle of Titus 3:5-7 says, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

This is a regeneration, or a begetting again, which we experience now and here; the regeneration alluded to in our subject, and for which there is a demand for evidences. Evidences are things which prove or show facts, testimonies, witnesses. In the case before us there is a demand for the testimonies which show that we are regenerated or born again; that we are the children of God. They are intended to convince and satisfy those who wish to know, and who have a right to know, that this is the fact. In the first place it is the privilege and duty of each one to know for himself that he is born again, or regenerated; and then there should be evidences to satisfy all other proper and reasonable inquirers that we are true Christians, that we are regenerated—born again.

In order to be satisfied, of a fact, it is necessary to give an impartial, intelligent, honest and thorough examination of the evidences that are required to sustain or establish it. We must know what we want to prove, and we must know what testimonies are required. For example, Paul

wrote to his Corinthian brethren, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves." II Cor. 13:5. To do this they must know what "the faith is, what it is to be in the faith," and they were required to know themselves, to know where they were. This was only another way of admonishing his brethren to examine themselves whether they were regenerated; for he that is in the faith is regenerated, and he that is born again, or regenerated is in the faith.

One very important evidence of regeneration is the being a consistent member of the true body or church of Christ. Paul to Romans (12:4) says, "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." To the Corinthians (I Cor. 12:13) he says, "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." "To the Ephesians (1:22, 23) he says, "And gave him to be the head over all *things* to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." In his letter to the Colossians (1:18) Paul says of Christ, "And he is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence." Again (verse 24) "for his body's sake, which is the church." Many other scriptures might be quoted, but these are sufficient to show that there is but one body of Christ, or true church, and that all true Christians, all the regenerated, all who are born again and continue in the new life are members of this one body.

There may be many bodies, or churches, but there is but one body or church of Christ; and there may be, and doubtless are, many nominal members who never were regenerated, and many who are hypocrites, or unfaithful and who have fallen from grace. In order, therefore, that membership of the body may afford evidence of regeneration, we must know that we became members in the proper way, and that we are living faithfully. To do this we must go to "the gospel of Christ, which is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. Rom. 1:16.

The question then is, how must we become living members of this one body? How must the sinner be born again and become a new creature in Christ? Christ, our Redeemer and Saviour, made every necessary provision, revealing the will of the Father, the plan of regeneration and salvation, to chosen witnesses, and dying on the cross and rising from the dead to make it possible for us to become new creatures and to inherit eternal life. Be-

fore he ascended to the Father, he commanded his apostles what to do that his great mission might be accomplished. It is necessary, therefore, for us to examine this great commission.

In the gospel by Matthew (28:18, 19) Jesus said to his eleven disciples, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." I assume now and here, without any fear of exception, that all who become disciples in the way, as Jesus understood it and as he meant that his disciples should understand it, are regenerated, born again, and are living members of the body or church of Christ.

In the gospel by Mark (16:15, 16) we find this language, "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Here again we have embraced an outline of the manner in which the sinner becomes a new creature in Christ. He must hear, or become acquainted with the Gospel of Christ. He must believe the Gospel. If this is done properly, it will bring about a change in heart and life, known as repentance and conversion; and he will embrace the earliest opportunity to be baptized according to the requirement of the Gospel. When all this is in strict accord with the Gospel, such an one is born again, and has all the evidences, internal and external, of regeneration. There is a "washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." So the disciples understood and taught. On the day of Pentecost, when they were baptized with the Holy Ghost, they preached the Gospel of Christ to the assembled thousands. These not only heard, but they were convinced and convicted. "They were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ." Acts 2:37, 38. This was not only to them, for he said, "The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call." This includes the faithful of all nations and comes down to us. "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." (verse 41.) These had the undeniable and gratifying evidences of regeneration. At this point it may be well to notice that these regenerated souls "continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship,